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Try Sending The Democrat For a Year to Some Relative or Friend as a Christmas Present

GRAVEST CRISIS IN HISTORY CONFRONTS AMERICAN RAILWAYS

War Has Closed Financial Markets of Europe to Them Indefinitely.

In view of the fact that the railroads of Kansas have filed an application for an increase in passenger rates before the State Public Utilities Commission, it is their desire to utilize this occasion for an intimate and frank discussion of the whole railroad question with the people of this state. To this end, the careful attention of the reader is invited to a series of articles which will appear in this newspaper during the next few weeks. All that is asked is that the people of Kansas, whose broadmindedness is a by-word throughout the country, do the railroads the justice to listen to their side of the story—and then form such conclusions as they think the facts warrant.

That the railroads of the United States are today confronted by the gravest crisis in their history there is not the slightest question. For some years they have been desperately struggling with an ever-increasing cost of operation in the face of reduced freight and passenger rates—but serious as this situation was before the European war, which has indefinitely closed to them the foreign money markets, has suddenly brought them face to face with a situation which threatens not merely many new receiverships, but the actual paralysis of the entire transportation industry of the nation. It was this state of affairs which compelled the closing of the New York Stock Exchange some months ago. What will happen when it opens only the future can tell. American railroads are valued in round figures at twenty billion dollars, and of this vast sum nearly five billion dollars worth of securities are held abroad. Should Europe, in its frantic struggle for funds, seek to convert these securities into ready gold when the Stock Exchange opens, as it did before it closed, where are the railroads to get the money with which to buy them? And if they haven't the money, what demoralization will follow not merely in railroad securities, but in all other great American industrial values as well?

President Wilson's Views.

That the situation is profoundly serious is manifested by the recent utterance of President Wilson to a group of Eastern railroad executives. In his letter to Mr. Trumbull of the Chesapeake & Ohio, he said:

"You ask me to call the attention of the country to the imperative need that railway credits be sustained and the railroads helped in every possible way, whether by private co-operative effort or by the action wherever feasible of governmental agencies, and I am glad to do so, because I think the need is very real.

"They are indispensable to our whole economic life, and railway securities are at the very heart of most investments, large and small public and private, by individuals and by institutions.

"I am confident there will be earnest and active co-operation in this matter, perhaps the one common interest of our whole industrial life.

"Undoubtedly men, both in and out of official position, will appreciate what is involved and lend their aid heartily wherever it is possible for them to lend it. But the emergency is in fact extraordinary and where there is manifest common interest we ought all of us to speak out in its behalf, and I am glad to join you in calling attention to it. This is the time for all to stand together in united effort to comprehend every interest and serve and sustain it in every legitimate way."

Railroad Lost Millions.

The net operating income of the railroads of the United States for the year ending June 30, 1914, was \$120,000,000 less than for the previous year. The gross earnings for the year were \$44,000,000 less than for 1913—while expenses and taxes were \$76,000,000 more. But heavy as this burden was before, the great struggle across the seas, carrying in its wake the destruction of untold hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of all kinds of property, renders the situation a thousand-fold more serious. It means, in short, that for a number of years to come Europe will have no surplus money for investment in the United States or elsewhere, and that American railroads will have to finance their future needs at home. How Herculean this task will be, saying nothing about protecting themselves against the dumping of foreign securities, may be judged from the fact that the bond and note obligations which will mature between now and the end of next year and which the railroads will have to meet in some way amount to more than \$563,000,000—and this doesn't take a dollar's worth of new improvements or betterments into consideration. These are obligations which were incurred in the past and which must be met as they fall due if the transportation companies are to be preserved from wholesale receiverships and ruin.

Manifently, therefore, American investors, big and little, will have to come to the rescue—and before they will consent to do this American railroad securities will have to be re-established as a sound, respected and paying investment—and this, on the basis of present railroad earnings, is impossible.

For this reason the railroads of Kansas believe the impending crisis demands that they lay this whole problem before the people of the entire state—that they have a heart to heart talk with the farmer, the merchant, the manufacturer, the banker, the laboring man, and all other citizens upon this great question which so vitally affects the future welfare of the commonwealth.

Why Railroads Are Helpless.

In times of acute financial stress, private industries are in a position to very largely adjust their affairs to meet the emergency of their commodities, cut their payroll in half, or shut down altogether and thus permit the storm to blow over without actual shipwreck. The railroads are in an entirely different position. Their rates are regulated by law and cannot be advanced without the consent of the people through their law making bodies. In order to please the convenience of the public and not to break down the commerce of the country they must operate their freight and passenger trains whether they carry a full load or only a quarter of a load—and in view of these facts, it is manifestly unfair to put the railroads in the same class with private industries in the present crisis and ask them to shift for themselves as best they can. When the people took over the complete making and regulation of railroad rates, they at the same time assumed the solemn implied obligation to see that the railroads get a square deal—for this is the only power which stands between them and ruin.

We believe every intelligent citizen will agree that agriculture, commerce and industry cannot get along without the railroads. On the other hand, the railroads cannot get along without the patronage and, what is equally essential, the good will, of the people. That some of those who have been entrusted with railroad management in the past are somewhat responsible for the apparent gulf between the public and the transportation companies is perhaps true. Busy and harassed by the Herculean tasks entrusted to

AUTO AND BUGGY COLLIDE.

Another automobile accident occurred on the road between here and Hoisington Sunday evening and as a result a horse belonging to Mike Dailey was so badly injured that it had to be killed and the auto was smashed up in pretty bad shape, and it was extremely fortunate that none of the occupants of either vehicle were injured.

Riley Garrett and Joe McCabe, both employees of the Great Bend Water and Electric Co., were returning from Hoisington where they had been doing some repair work, and on the road north of town met Billie Vincent, Stanley Duling and Ralph White, in Charles Gleadall's automobile, who were returning to that city after bringing Mr. Gleadall and Walter Disney to this place.

The accident occurred shortly after dark and the lights on the auto were not working good, and it is said that one of them was entirely out. Garrett noticed the one light coming down the road and told McCabe that there was a motorcycle coming, and a moment afterwards the collision occurred. The boys from the light and water plant had met another car just before the Gleadall machine came along and were still turned out to their side of the road, but as the boys in the auto were working with their lights while traveling, they probably failed to keep the car to their side of the road or look closely where they were going, and the machine struck the horse on the left side and injured it so badly that it was shortly afterwards killed. The radiator, fenders and front axle of the car were badly twisted and the machine put out of commission, and it is likely that the boys were driving slowly else someone would probably have been killed.

Young Vincent was driving the car at the time, and his father has recognized that the boys were at least partly to blame, for he has made satisfactory settlement with Mr. Dailey for the loss of the horse.

STILL PUSHING AHEAD.

Will Weber, of Ellinwood, who is this year taking the law course in the Kansas university at Lawrence, and who is one of the young men of whom the county can well be proud for the push and vim which has characterized all his work, is in addition to making good in his school work, qualifying in a business way as well. After graduating from the Ellinwood schools, Will attended Cooper College at Sterling, paying his expenses by writing insurance for the National Life Co., and last year was so successful that he was one of the few representatives of the company who secured a free trip to the national meeting at Chicago, and this year he is attempting to be one of the representatives who will go to the big San Francisco Exposition at the expense of his company, and he writes that he has almost reached the mark which will entitle him to the trip.

BUYS PRIZE WINNERS.

Ray Baird, one of the progressive young farmers of the Pawnee Rock neighborhood and one of the leading horsemen of the county, last week made a substantial increase to his herd, and also a substantial decrease in the size of his bank account, by the purchase of the fine team of Percheron mares, which were owned by the Harris Bros., of east of town, and which took the first prize at the county fair last fall. Mr. Baird has been engaged in breeding Percheron horses for a number of years and has some of the finest animals in this part of the state, and his recent purchase will make a fine addition to his herd.

NEW CORONER.

Governor Hodges has appointed Coroner-elect Dr. A. R. Haas, of Ellinwood, as coroner for Barton county, to fill out the unexpired term of Dr. McCauley, of Hoisington, who has disposed of his practice at that place and will move to Idaho.

Fred Moore was a business visitor from the south side Monday.

MRS. STELLA WATERS.

Mrs. Stella Waters, formerly Miss Stella Gwinn, and a resident of this community, died at the hospital in Wichita Tuesday, following an operation. Mrs. Waters was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harve Gwinn and a niece of Sam and Robert Gwinn of this city. The family were early day residents of this county but removed to Oklahoma several years ago where Stella was united in marriage to Charles Waters a traveling salesman, who, with their two children, a boy and a girl; her parents, brothers and sisters and other relatives, is left to mourn her death. She will be remembered by many of the people of this city and especially by those of the No. 4 community, west of town, where the family lived for many years, and her death will be a sad shock to her many friends, for she was a woman who was highly esteemed and very popular among all her acquaintances.

The body was brought to this city, and funeral services were held from the Presbyterian church Thursday afternoon and interment made in the Great Bend cemetery. A sister and brother, Mrs. Chester Hartshorn and Willis Gwinn, of Ford county; another brother, Mark, of Wellington, a cousin, Charles Kincaid, of Horace, were among the relatives here to attend the funeral.

FAIR OFFICERS.

The directors of the Barton County Fair Association held their annual meeting this week and re-elected most of the old officers for the coming year. The itinerary will be as follows:

Nick Smith, President.
O. W. Dawson, Vice President.
Porter Young, Secretary.
Robert Merten, Treasurer.
Charles Lobdell, Charles Lischesky, L. P. Aber, Wm. Deal, C. L. Moses, C. S. Allison, Art Fish, D. A. Banta, and Will Stanley, Directors.

Thos. Clayton, Superintendent.
L. P. Aber, Grounds Manager.
Ira Brougher was elected delegate to the State Board of Agriculture, and E. R. Moses, alternate. Porter Young was elected reporter for the local association.

The report of the secretary showed that the association had \$8.36 in the treasury on the 3rd day of last March. At the meeting yesterday all bills had been paid and there was a balance on hand of \$401.94. The receipts this year were \$4,428.84, and the expenses \$4,027.90. Of this amount \$750 was paid for attractions at the fair. The racing program cost \$855.75. The amount spent for premiums and prizes was \$719. The bands cost \$165 and a note of \$535 was paid. Small bills amounted to \$654 and the balance was for small accounts. The resources of the association are about \$4,400, and the liability, the capital stock, amount to \$3,800. A dividend is left on stock of \$536, should it be wanted.

Whenever the attendants at the Business Men's meeting lack for some subject for discussion they can always fall back upon the time honored question of the awful condition of the road south from the river bridge to the Geo. Hart corner, and can enjoy a most lively and entertaining discussion as to the best way to remedy the same. The road is almost always in miserable shape, but right at the present time it is just a little bit worse than usual, and that is saying a good deal. Just how to fix this road in good shape so that it will stay that way, with a reasonable expenditure of money, is the question that has been bothering the south riders for years and also the business men of this city. It is going to mean the spending of a large sum if the road is ever permanently fixed the way it should be and the longer it is put off the more it is going to cost. The road has been adopted as one of the county roads and the county and township officials and the business men of the city should have a get-together meeting and see that the road is fixed.

Miss Edith Harris visited with relatives and friends in Pawnee Rock Sunday.

LOST BUNCH OF CATTLE.

Leslie Doonan, of just north-east of town, is several hundred dollars loser this week from a spell of sickness which hit a bunch of young cattle he has been feeding. So far he has lost fourteen head of good calves, and Green Wilson, who had some cattle with Doonan's, has lost one. A load of corn fodder, which was slightly wet, was fed to the herd Monday and shortly afterwards a number of the animals were taken sick and died, and so far fifteen head have been lost from the herd.

SAFETY MATCHES NOT SAFE.

A combination of a small boy and a match came close to making a serious fire at the home of W. S. Nelson one day this week, even though the match was of the "safety" variety. A couple of suits of clothes belonging to Ed Nelson, which were hanging in his room, were set on fire by his younger brother and were destroyed, but the fire was discovered and extinguished before further damage was done.

COST \$150.00.

J. N. Wilkerson, the detective who worked on the Morgan murder case, was here this week and made settlement with the county officials for the reward which was offered in the case, the settlement being for \$150.00.

It was agreed by the sheriff and county attorney that Mr. Wilkerson was entitled to the credit and reward for the apprehension and arrest and confession of White, and settlement was made in the above named amount.

If you have never traded at Hosteller's Cash Grocery, you have no idea of the saving you can make by trading at that place. Nothing but the very best lines of goods and everything sold at the lowest cash price possible. Try them for your Christmas Supplies.

Mr. and Mrs. George Schumacher were up from Radium Sunday spending the day with Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Davis and their many Great Bend friends.

Mrs. Charles Herrman and son visited with relatives and friends in Kinsley the last of the week.

MAY HAVE NEW BRIDGE.

The Board of County Commissioners are contemplating the building of a new river bridge at Ellinwood, and Charles Felps, one of the engineers from Manhattan, was in that city yesterday taking measurements and looking after the matters and plans will probably be drawn and submitted to the board. The bridges at Ellinwood have been in very bad shape for a long time needed, for the people at Ellinwood and vicinity are entitled to this improvement. If the new bridge is built, it will be of concrete, and when it is finished the expense will be ended, and there will not be a continual bill for repairs as there is at present. It will probably be located a little west of where the old wooden one just south of Ellinwood now stands, as the river is considerably narrower there than at any other point.

KNOCKED 'ER OUT.

Evidently the people of Great Bend, or at least a certain percent of them, are not in favor of an occupation tax such as was recently passed by the city commissioners. An ordinance was passed for such a tax, by the city commissioners some months ago, but a remonstrance was circulated and enough signers were secured to make the ordinance null and void. Another ordinance, somewhat different from the last, was passed a couple of weeks ago, and the commissioners were of the opinion that there would be but little objection to the last measure, but a remonstrance was again put into circulation and enough signers were secured to again put it out of commission.

With the revenue derived from this tax the commissioners were figuring on paying for the maintenance of the White Way, and with the ordinance now knocked out it looks as though some other means would have to be devised for the securing of this needed improvement for the city, but the commissioners say that no more occupation tax goes with them.

Mrs. George Gwinn was in Hutchinson the last of the week, visiting with Mr. and Mrs. Fred Savage.

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